The Humble PROPOSALS OF Sundry Learned and Pious DIVINES Within this Kingdome. *Concerning the* ENGAGEMENT, Intended to be imposed on them for their Subscriptions.

PSAL. 64. 5. *They commune of laying snares privily.*
EXOD. 23. 2. *Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil.*
PET. 3. 17. *For it is better if the will of God be so, that ye suffer for well doing then for evill doing.*

LONDON,
Printed in the Year, 1650.

PROPOSALS

OF

Sundry Learned and Pious

DIVINES

Within this Kingdome,

Concerning the

ENGAGEMENT;

Intended to be imposed on them for their Subscriptions.

Psal. 15. 4. 5. They commune of things fervent privately.
Hosea. 7. 3. 4. They flatter not follow a multitude to do evil.
Psal. 3. 17. Feeds is as ter of the gall of God so as thus
refuse for not doing then for evil doing.

LONDON,

Printed in the Year, 1650.

The humble Proposals of sundry Divines within this Kingdom, Concerning the Engagement intended to be imposed on them for their Subscriptions.

WE Ministers of the Gospell of *Jesus Christ*, who have all of us from the beginning faithfully served the *Parliament*, and have in pursuance of those great and honourable ends of just Liberty and Reformation, suffered many and grievous things in our Names and Estates from the common Enemy: and to this day have adhered *to our first Principles*, and do still promise in our Places and Stations to *maintain the Peace of this Nation, and to pay obedience to the Lawes thereof*; concerning it our duty in such a time as this, in all wayes of meekness and humility to endeavour the Preservation of our inward Peace and outward Safety, *being streightned in Conscience upon the case of the present Engagement*, do humbly offer these ensuing particulars. Sect. 1.

1. That although we hold our selves bound by our former *Solemn Covenants and Engagements, in that sense of them wherein they were by publick Authority imposed on us*, yet being convinced of the necessity of civill Government in a Land, for the preservation of Humane Sect. 2.

Society, and prevention of all those Evills which the outrages of wicked men unrestrained would produce, and upon mature deliberation considering, That when the wise and holy Providence of God (whose Judgements are unsearchable, and wayes past finding out) shall at any time so shake the foundations of States and Kingdoms, as to disable one Government from affording protection and preservation, and to admit any other to obtain it; it is not then strange to the will of God, light of Nature, judgement of the learned, and practice of Christians in former ages, nor to our own principles or former Engagements, to live quietly and peaceably in our places and callings, *and to submit to such things as are imposed upon, or required of us, by the powers which are in actual possession, being things in themselves lawfull and necessarie to the preservation of our selves and others*, (for this we conceive may be done without disputing the right or title of those that are in place of Magistracy) we do upon these premises declare *that we will accordingly* behave our selves.

2. That we do humbly conceive that there is a *great difference between* these things and a Subscription to this Engagement, in the words wherein it is required, and that in divers respects.

First, *This Subscription* (*as to our Consciences*) doth imply *an approbation of the present establishment, as effected by a full and a free Authority*.

Secondly, *An active concurrence, and as it were a ratifying consent of the people thereunto, it having been declared, that the originall of all just power is in the People*.

Thirdly

Thirdly, An obligation to all unallowed, should place and importance, to the promoting and strengthening of it, & not only of it (but by a parity of Reason) of any other, which by the possible advantage of power, may at any time hereafter, even to the prejudice and ruine of this, *set up it selfe, and then require of us the like subscription.*

3. Being by this Engagement bound up to these particulars, as the words seem to import, we further conceive; That we shall by this subscription, violate those former Engagements, in Oathes, Protestations, and in the Solemn League and Covenant, wherein we were by the former Commands of Parl. obliged, in which last particular, if the time we entred into it be considered, *viz.* In the day of our extremity, or the Religious solemnity, with hands lifted up to the most high God; or the matter of it, which is comprehensive of things Sacred and Civill, and particularly of the Rights and Priviledges of Parliament, and the Liberties of the Kingdome: or the sense wherein we then took it; or the asseveration, that we would never be drawn from it by any Terrour or Combination whatsoever; or the durable obligation which we brought upon our selves by it, even all the dayes of our lives; or the Considerations which we had before our eyes in the taking of it, namely the Glory of God, the advancement of the Kingdome of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the Happinesse of the King and his Posterity. These things being duly considered, do leave such an awfull impression on our Consciences, that *unlesse the consistency thereof with this Engagement be made unquestionably clear unto us, it cannot but render our* Consciences trembling & doubtfull, & so the act of Engaging, by the Apostles rule, to us unlawfull, as by a parity of Reason

it would have been undoubtedly inconsistent with our Covenant, to have subscribed an Engagement to the King and Lords, without the Commons of *England*, if it should by their Agreement and Authority, have been required of us.

Sect. 5. 4. These things being considered in the nature of the Engagement, and in the full relation to which it stands to former Engagements, cannot in our judgements but minister matter of *general scandal and offence to multitudes of men*, both good and bad, many of whom being not able to make, or happily to much as understand subtile distinctions, whereby guilt may either be evaded or palliated, will look upon us as breakers of our Oaths and Covenants, as prevaricators of the most sacred and solemn things, as men of ductile spirits, and prostituted Consciences, led by principles of fear or interest: which prejudice (though we would grant, were more founded in the ignorance and mistakes of these men, then many solid and just reasons) would yet grosly wound the Gospel, expose our Ministry to scorn (the honour whereof ought to be dearer to us then our lives) endanger the reputation, and so weaken the power of it in the Consciences of our hearers (who though through fear or other private ends may themselves have subscribed, yet retain low thoughts of us, as if we acted on the like principles) as that we cannot but believe, but *Christ* would be a greater looser by our subscription, then the State can any way be a gainer by it; we desire always to keep in mind the noble resolution of the Apostle, who would not in case of scandall *use his own just power, but chose rather to suffer all things, lest he should hinder the Gospel of Christ*, and concluded, it was better for him to die, then that any in that behalf should make *frustrating*

ying thus. Upon these and such like grounds, purely conscientious, and not out of any private interest or design, contrary to the peace of this Common-wealth, we are necessitated to forbear Subscription, unless either *by Interpretation of the Engagement* (as of the Covenant) or otherwise, our Consciences shall be cleared of important scruples.

So we humbly crave leave further to represent, *Sect. 6.* that our former Governours (upon duly considering that men even in highest authority as well as others, are by the doctrine of the Scriptures concerning Scandall, bound to avoid the laying of stones and stumbling blocks in the way of their Brethren) have not onely attempted (as in their late Canons) to impose an unsavoury Oath, but also enforced Subscriptions on many godly and learned Ministers, to the utter undoing of themselves and Families, and that with such rigour, that the beginning of the *Fourth* late Generation, was with the deprivation of 300 or 400 of them; and though we shall not take upon us to charge upon that severity of theirs the consequences which have followed, yet we may offer this observation, that sundry examples may be given of Governours, who have laid the unhappy foundation of ruining evills to themselves and their people, in the beginning of their Government.

And therefore we do presume that those in pre- *Sect. 7.* sent power by standing to their professed Principles and Resolutions, in their respect to tender Consciences, will not embolden us to the sad Boldness of shuning either sinne or affliction, and hope that the many years experience of our *quiet behaviour* and faithfull service, may give them a better assurance and security for our peaceable conversation, then the fained Subscripuons of ve-

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perated in the common cause of Reformation and

So we humbly crave leave further to represent Sect. 6.

Sect. 7.